Ernst Kaltenbrunner

In 1940, Ernst Kaltenbrunner was a major developer of the Mauthausen KZ concentration camp. As established in 1942, the installation of gas chambers as execution methods in concentration and extermination camps was a joint idea of Ernst Kaltenbrunner and Heinrich Himmler. In 1943, Kaltenbrunner was appointed Chief of the Security Police and Sicherheitsdienst, or SD, for the Reich Security Main Office, or RSHA. In 1944, the decoration known as the Knight's Cross of the War Merit, Cross with Swords, was given to General of the Police Dr. Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Chief of the Security Police and the SD.

During Kaltenbrunner's term in office as Chief of the Security Police and SD, multiple crimes were committed by the SIPO and SD related to policy established by the RSHA or orders issued out of the RSHA for all of which he was responsible by virtue of his office. Once the war took a turn for the worst and he was wanted for the crimes, Kaltenbrunner attempted to make a run for it and escape the punishment. Once he was caught, he was found guilty on counts 3 and 4, or war crimes and crimes against humanity. As a result, Ernst Kaltenbrunner was hanged on October 16, 1946.

The fact that such malicious acts were so obviously overlooked is quite disturbing. It’s horrible that we’re able to look back and see that such appalling events took place right under our noses for so long. What’s even more unfortunate is that we never even realized these awful and terrifying events were taking place for a while. Ernst Kaltenbrunner was an incredibly evil man, despite the fact that at one time he tried to kill Hitler. If not for him, the idea and installment of gas chambers would’ve either never happened or been well delayed, possibly saving many lives. This man is the true definition of a villain.